

The Cambrian Peshor*

Confession of St. Peter (January 18, 2021)

The Neolithic Kingdom

Thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my church . . .
Jesus (Matthew 16:18)

Ye, also as lively stones are built up a spiritual house . . .
1 Peter 2:5

Beloved Friends:

The Bible has a lot to say about rocks. In fact, it can be argued that the biblical world was a stone age that slowly merged into the age of metals. Metals were a boon to the postdiluvian world because of their malleability. Stones are hard to craft into a desired form. They can be brittle. They can be too hard. Metals on the other hand can be easily shaped once heat has been applied to them and fashioned into a desired form. Metals are appealing to humanistic man. The first metallurgists were the descendants of Cain (Genesis 4:22).

The stone artifacts from the megalithic era are impressive for their exquisite craftsmanship, scale and longevity. Using precious stones, the quality of jewelry, sculpture, and structures exceed modern methods and defy explanation. While Dr. Joseph Davidovits has demonstrated that many of these artifacts - such as the pyramids and ancient statuary - were constructed using a poured geopolymer

cement (*The Pyramids: An Enigma Solved*, Dorset, 1988), not all were created by using molds and forms. Many items including tools were chiseled and shaped with precision. The *Grooved Ware Culture* is an example of what I am talking about.

God required that his altars were to be untouched by the craftsmanship of man. No iron tools could be applied to shape them:

And if thou wilt make me an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn stone: for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it.

- Exodus 20:25, cf. Deuteronomy 27:5

Thus, the altar of stones became forever a testament to the sovereignty of God and man's dependence upon Him. Man was not allowed to shape the altar of God.

The Kingdom of the Confessors

When Christ told his disciple Simon that he was now "Peter" (*petros*=a stone), it was because of his confession to the sovereignty of God: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." It was a confession to the immutability and eternity of God's revelation and fatherhood in Jesus Christ as the savior of the world, but also a confession to the notion that the salvific value of "the Christ" was not because it was somehow a meritorious work of man, but that it was the work of God ("For flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father in heaven" - Matthew 16:17):

For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.

- Ephesians 2:8-9

There are other things which are likened to stones in the Scriptures. Jesus claimed that His teachings were like the stones of a firm foundation that will endure the storms of time:

*Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them,
I will liken him unto a wise man which built his house upon a rock.*

- Matthew 7:24

The Greek word here for "sayings" is *logos* and suggests an analogous correlation between "logos" and a "rock." Jesus is identified in the Fourth Gospel and elsewhere as "the Word" (*logos*), who is also the "rock of our salvation" (Psalm 95:1). It is from "logos" that we get words like "logical" and in its definition, a *logos* represents a completed thought or concept which has internal coherence and integrity upon which an inference can be made. It is a statement or proposition which in logic requires a non-contradictory affirmation about a thing. This is the foundation for sound thinking.

Thus, the teachings of Jesus have logical value. As an oracle, they represent a different kind of stone: the stones found in the priestly ephod - the Urim and Thummim - which provide the "Yes" and "No" of the binary certainty of Divine revelation. Logic works the same way. Our modern computer programming is based upon logic. To work, it must not have any internal contradictions (bugs). If it does, a computer will lock-up and cease to function.

It is also interesting to note that "sons" (*ben*) of a father are like the "stones" (*eben*) of a house. Consequently, the "building of a house" means not just the structure of a building but the heirs of the estate. They are heirs because they embrace the name, the *logos* of the house:

*For I know him, that he will **command** his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment, that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.*

- Genesis 18:19

Just as you cannot have a fraction of a person, so likewise, you cannot have a fraction of a stone. It has to be a completed stone as found in nature.

Likewise, as in nature which requires that "things" be unbroken in order to truly represent that thing, an uncompleted thought or concept is broken and is not a *logos*: it cannot be used to build a doctrine or belief.

In logic, a thing is defined in the sum of its attributes. There are certain attributes which we can delineate to identify a cow from a horse from a man from a corn plant. These attributes were identified and codified by man into picture representations, then hieroglyphs, then letters and words - and finally, confessions.

The Pythagorean Creed

This brings us to the importance of the Pythagorean doctrine of numbers: whole numbers. Originally, numbers were represented by letters in the alphabets of the respective languages. Later, the names of things were assigned a numerical value based upon the sum of the letters used in the name. Then, finally, a code language of numbers was used to communicate concepts:

The most important, distinctive teaching of Pythagoras and his school was that all things are numbers. As Aristotle says, "the Pythagoreans, as they are called, devoted themselves to mathematics, they were the first to advance this study, and having brought up in it they thought its principles were the principles of all things."

- *Jesus the Master Builder*, Gordon Stachen,
Floris Books, 1998, p. 81

In our popular culture, Pythagoras is known to school children by the theorem in geometry for finding the hypotenuse of a right triangle. But he was lauded by the intellectuals of the Renaissance and

Enlightenment (Copernicus, Kepler, Newton, et al) as the founder of philosophy and scientific inquiry, as well:

In antiquity, Pythagoras was credited with many mathematical and scientific discoveries, including the Pythagorean theorem, Pythagorean tuning, the five regular solids, the Theory of Proportions, the sphericity of the Earth, and the identity of the morning and evening stars as the planet Venus. It was said that he was the first man to call himself a philosopher ("lover of wisdom") and that he was the first to divide the globe into five climatic zones. Classical historians debate whether Pythagoras made these discoveries, and many of the accomplishments credited to him likely originated earlier or were made by his colleagues or successors. Some accounts mention that the philosophy associated with Pythagoras was related to mathematics and that numbers were important, but it is debated to what extent, if at all, he actually contributed to mathematics or natural philosophy.

- Wikipedia entry and following:

And more on Pythagoras himself:

Pythagoras of Samos (c. 570 BC – 495 BC) was an ancient Ionian Greek philosopher and the eponymous founder of Pythagoreanism. His political and religious teachings were well known in Magna Graecia and influenced the philosophies of Plato, Aristotle, and, through them, Western philosophy. Knowledge of his life is clouded by legend, but he appears to have been the son of Mnesarchus, a gem-engraver on the island of Samos. Modern scholars disagree regarding Pythagoras's education and influences, but they do agree that, around 530 BC, he travelled to Croton in southern Italy, where he founded a school in which initiates were sworn to secrecy and lived a communal, ascetic lifestyle. This lifestyle entailed a number of dietary prohibitions, traditionally said to have included vegetarianism, although modern

scholars doubt that he ever advocated for complete vegetarianism.

The subject of "Pythagoreanism" is vast and many avenues of discovery can be pursued. His alleged vegetarianism may have been misunderstood - as was that ascribed to James, the brother of Jesus - but generally, scholars have speculated that it was associated with his supposed belief in reincarnation:

The teaching most securely identified with Pythagoras is metempsychosis, or the "transmigration of souls", which holds that every soul is immortal and, upon death, enters into a new body.

-Wikipedia entry continued

[To which it can be added in jest: "Don't step on that ant, it might be your uncle!"]

It is true that a number of the early Church Fathers condemned Pythagoras precisely for this doctrine of metempsychosis, but others applauded him for his other contributions. Both Jerome and Augustine defended him:

Many early Christians had a deep respect for Pythagoras. Eusebius (c. 260 – c. 340 AD), bishop of Caesarea, praises Pythagoras in his "Against Hierokles" for his rule of silence, his frugality, his "extraordinary" morality, and his wise teachings. In another work, Eusebius compares Pythagoras to Moses. In one of his letters, the Church Father Jerome (c. 347 – 420 AD) praises Pythagoras for his wisdom and, in another letter, he credits Pythagoras for his belief in the immortality of the soul, which he suggests Christians inherited from him. Augustine of Hippo (354 – 430 AD) rejected Pythagoras's teaching of metempsychosis without explicitly naming him, but otherwise expressed admiration for him. In "On the Trinity," Augustine lauds the fact that Pythagoras was humble enough to call himself a philosophos or

"lover of wisdom" rather than a "sage". In another passage, Augustine defends Pythagoras's reputation, arguing that Pythagoras certainly never taught the doctrine of metempsychosis.

- Wikipedia entry

His influence can be seen in Copernicus who claimed that his heliocentric views were purely Pythagorean and Newton with his contemporaries who began to use celestial mechanics to explain the movements of the stars:

He may have also devised the doctrine of musica universalis, which holds that the planets move according to mathematical equations and thus resonate to produce an inaudible symphony of music. (Ibid.)

Clement of Alexandria, an Ante-Nicene Father, had this to say in his *Miscellanies*:

5. . . Pythagoras shown to be a Persian. Of the secret books of this man, those who follow the heresy of Prodicus boast to be in possession. Alexander, in his book "On the Pythagorean Symbols," relates that Pythagoras was a pupil of Nazaratus the Assyrian (some think that he is Ezekiel; but he is not, as will afterwards be shown), and will have it that, in addition to these, Pythagoras was a hearer of the Galatae and the Brahmins.

- *Book I, Chapter XV - "The Greek Philosophy in Great Part Derived from the Barbarians"* (trans. by Peter Kirby - Internet source)

Wikipedia accounts, which tend to rely on secular sources, overlook Clement's claim that Pythagoras was tutored by a "Nazaratus the Assyrian" who "some think" was Ezekiel the prophet. While Clement did not believe it (for doctrinal reasons), it might be that Pythagoras' true opinions were misrepresented by his followers or by his enemies and consequently, Clement was misinformed. Pythagoras was certainly contemporary with both Ezekiel and Daniel,

and considering Daniel's stature in the Babylonian Court (as discussed in a previous *Pesher*), it seems likely there was some kind of connection to these prophets.

Clement adds this interesting account identifying Pythagoreanism as an iconoclastic movement among the Romans when Rome was just a city-state before it was a republic and then later an empire:

*Numa the king of the Romans was a Pythagorean, **and aided by the precepts of Moses**, prohibited from making an image of God in human form, and of the shape of a living creature. Accordingly, during the first hundred and seventy years, though building temples, they made no cast or graven image. For Numa secretly showed them that the Best of Beings could not be apprehended except by the mind alone. Thus philosophy, a thing of the highest utility, flourished in antiquity among the barbarians, shedding its light over the nations. And afterwards it came to Greece. First in its ranks were the prophets of the Egyptians; and the Chaldeans among the Assyrians; and the Druids among the Gauls; and the Samanæans among the Bactrians; and the philosophers of the Celts; and the Magi of the Persians, who foretold the Saviour's birth, and came into the land of Judæa guided by a star. The Indian gymnosophists are also in the number, and the other barbarian philosophers. (emphasis added)*

In an earlier *Pesher*, we discussed the cross-communication between the prophets Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel. They were contemporaries with Pythagoras and this "Nazaratus the Assyrian," his alleged mentor:

Another tradition makes Ezekiel the servant of Jeremiah (Gregory Naz. Or. 47), and Jerome supposes that the prophets being contemporaries during a part of their mission interchanged their prophecies, sending them respectively to Jerusalem and Chaldaea for mutual confirmation and encouragement, that the Jews might hear, as it were, a strophe and antistrophe of warning

and promise; "velut ac si duo cantores alter ad alterius vocem sese componerent" (Calvin, Comment. ad' Ezech. 1:2). Although it was only towards the very close of Jeremiah's lengthened office that Ezekiel received his commission, yet these suppositions are easily accounted for by the internal harmony between the two prophets, in proof of which Havernick (Introduct. to Ezek.) quotes Ezekiel 13 as compared with Jer 23:9 sq., and Ezekiel 34 with Jeremiah 33 etc.

- McClintock and Strong Biblical Cyclopedia (Internet source)

Ezekiel's encounter with a "UFO" - "the wheel within a wheel" - in the early chapters of his book and other coded messages in the texts suggest a strong Pythagorean flavor and perhaps explains why various Enlightenment thinkers of the 17th through 19th Centuries, such as William Blake, were so enamoured with his writings. These are rabbit trails that must be pursued another time. What concerns us here is the need to tie these traditions together with Qumran and the Bethany Family. We find this in the Pythagorean composition of the Johannine books of the New Testament.

Pythagoreans=Essenes=Christians?

I am relying now on Strachen's analysis in his very useful study, *Jesus the Master Builder, Druid Mysteries and the Dawn of Christianity* (cited above). He quotes and develops the research and analysis of French theologian and Catholic philosopher, Simone Weil (1909-43 AD), on Greek philosophy and its impact on New Testament theology. In her posthumously published *Intimations of Christianity among the Ancient Greeks* she says,

Pythagorean thought is for us the great mystery of Greek civilization. It recurs everywhere, again and again. It impregnates almost all the poetry, almost all the philosophy - and especially Plato, whom Aristotle regarded as a pure Pythagorean. The

music, the architecture, the sculpture, all the sciences of ancient Greece proceeded from it; so did arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, mechanics and biology - Plato's political thought (in its most authentic form, which means as it is formulated in the dialogue, the "Statesman") also derives from the Pythagorean doctrine. It embraced almost all secular life.

(Strachen, p. 96)

He then cites her reiteration of a sampling of Jesus' sayings from the Gospel of John to illustrate the Pythagorean influence in the way Jesus taught and also in the way that the New Testament presented His message:

- *As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. John 17:18*
- *I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father. John 10:14*
- *As the father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. John 15:9*

The Pythagorean doctrine which these passages from St John are examples, according to Weil, is that of the theology of proportion. . . Weil believes that the writer of St John's gospel has used analogies from geometry to state profound theological truths . . . (page 99)

Put in simple terms, the geometrical proportion is defined as being composed of three terms in which A is to B as B is to C. Applying this to St John's texts we get: "And the glory which thou (A) gavest me (B), I (B) have given them (C)." Likewise "As thou (A) hast sent me (B) into the world, even so have I (B) also sent them (C) into the world." And "As the Father (A) hath loved me (B), so have I (B) loved you (C)." (page 99)

These geometrical patterns are found elsewhere in the New Testament, but are especially dominant in the Johannine literature.

*Weil points out an important distinction between proportions which have three terms and those which have four. Those which have four, that is A is to B as C is to D , like those derived from Thales' similar triangles, **have proportion but not mediation**. Only those proportions, principally the geometric but also the arithmetic and harmonic, which have three terms, relate to the concept of mediation. It is only the third term, not third and fourth, to which the notion of mediation applies. **This is the heart of the Pythagorean doctrine** which Weil reiterates throughout her essay. **All this explains not only the doctrine of the Trinity but also the concept of Christ being the Mediator.***

(page 100-101 Emphasis added)

The phrases from St John cited above have so clearly and insistently the aspect of an algebraic equation that this is manifestly what is meant and what allusion is made to. . . The other Platonic equation, "God is a perpetual geometer," obviously has a double sense and refers at the same time to the order of the world and to the mediatory function of the Word. To sum up, the appearance of geometry in Greece is the most dazzling of all the prophecies which foretold Christ. (page 101)

She is arguing here that while the Old Testament prophets foretold of the Jewish Messiah in the texts which we might call "typological prophecy," the Pythagoreans foretold Christ in the language of mathematics and geometrical proportion - which would include the astronomical observations of the Magi as noted by Clement above. This was not so by accident. Jesus Christ and His followers taught that He was not merely the national messiah of the Jews, but also the savior of the Gentiles: **the mediator necessary for a philosophical and logical resolution of the dualistic tension in natural law.**

[Readers of Albert Pike take note!]

To this point, Strachen concludes with citing commentators Betz and Riesner:

So we may reckon that a whole group of Essenes were converted to Jesus as the Messiah. These converted Essenes formed a body of theologians who were highly qualified for their time. They were capable of working out at a deep intellectual level who Jesus was and how he had brought salvation. A comparison with the Qumran texts shows that New Testament expressions and notions which many people regarded as Greek and late are, rather, Palestinian and early. That applies to such disputed parts of the New Testament as the Gospel of John and the first chapter of Acts.

- *Ibid*, p. 176

To which we could add the Lukean birth stories of John the Baptist and Jesus, Stephen's speech in Acts 7 and other New Testament texts, especially, perhaps, the entire Book of Hebrews.

The Logos and The End of the World

And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.

- Jesus, Matthew 21:44

Finally in our discussion, there are the judgment stones - the hailstones which fall from heaven - or the rocks hurled for the purpose of capital punishment, as in "stoning to death." These are likened to the manifestations of God's wrath, especially in the raining of "fire and brimstone." In the text above, the stone Jesus is referring to is the Messianic cornerstone of prophecy (v. 42). The self-judgment of "hearing" His words results in a brokenness and repentance which protects us from the annihilation of being "ground to powder" in the day of judgment.

It is significant that "brimstone" is translated by some as "sulfur," but in the Greek, it is "theion": *divinity*. Sulfur is associated with a cleansing action which purges parasites and disease. Fire consumes, but "sulfur" - although mingled with fire - purges. Thus, we see in the judgment of fire and brimstone: it is the fire which destroys us but it is the brimstone which can save us. Pythagoreanism shows us how.

We are called by the Prophet Daniel to associate the inauguration of the Messianic kingdom as a "stone hewn from a mountain" "without hands" which falls from heaven and destroys the kingdoms represented by the polymetallon image :

And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.

Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof is sure.

- Daniel 2:44-45

The Day of St. Peter's Confession

Peter was among the first of the Apostles to express a confession of saving faith as it was in our introductory text above. But Peter did not fully understand the meaning of his confession, because it was not much later that Jesus rebuked him as "a satan" for trying to dissuade Him from His mission of atonement (Matthew 16:22-23). Clearly, salvation does not depend upon the sophistication of our understanding but rather upon our submission to the rebuke of the Great Shepherd.

Likewise, those who think that infants cannot be baptized because they do not understand what is happening to them and cannot offer a confession are not allowing for the work of the Shepherd through the child's obedience to its parents. We had no control over our first birth and surely we do not over our second birth. Both are the work of God's sovereignty and of His love:

Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of heaven.

- Jesus

A servant of Jesus,

James

Collect for the Day

Almighty Father, who inspired Simon Peter, first among the apostles, to confess Jesus as Messiah and Son of the living God: Keep your Church steadfast upon the rock of this faith, so that in unity and peace we may proclaim the one truth and follow the one Lord, our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

**Cambrian Peshier* is the pastoral epistle of the Cambrian Episcopal Church of the Grail, a fellowship and abbey adhering to a spiritual tradition from ancient Wales. We use the Authorized Version of the Bible (King James Version) as our default translation and the Book of Common Prayer of the Episcopalian Church for liturgical guidance. We are not an affiliate of any denomination.

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